

Inriver abundance, spawning distribution, and run timing of Copper River Chinook salmon in 2003

Abstract: In 2003 radiotelemetry methods were used to estimate spawning distribution, run timing, and inriver abundance of Chinook salmon *Oncorhynchus tshawytscha* in the Copper River, Alaska. The estimated spawning proportions by major drainage were, 0.11 for the Klutina River, 0.10 for the Tonsina River, 0.17 for the Gulkana River, 0.34 for the Chitina River, 0.05 for the Tazlina River, and 0.05 for the East Fork Chistochina River. Run-timing patterns at the capture site varied among the major spawning stocks. The mean date of passage at the capture site varied from 26 May for Chinook salmon bound for the upper Copper River to 9 June for the Tonsina River mainstem spawners. In addition, the run timing of Chinook salmon bound for the tributaries of the Tonsina and Klutina rivers was earlier than their mainstem counterparts. Two-sample mark-recapture techniques were used to estimate inriver abundance at the lower boundary of the Chitina subdistrict dip net fishery. Total abundance was estimated to be 33,488 (SE-8,389) Chinook salmon ≥ 620 mm MEF for the period 15 May-30 September.

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